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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KATHMANDU 000232

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SUBJECT: NEPAL: JTMM WREAKS HAVOC IN TERA

REF: 06 KATHMANDU 3252

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty for reasons 1.4(b/d).

Summary

1. (C) The Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM)(Terai People's Liberation Front), a Maoist splinter group, has played a key role in ratcheting up violent protests wracking Nepal's Terai, or southern belt. The JTMM broke with the Maoists in 2003 over its demand for an independent state for the Madhesi people in the Terai. The Maoists declared war against the organization in July 2006. At the same time, the JTMM split into two factions and intensified its violent activities in the Terai. The ongoing protest program the Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF) launched in the Terai on January 16 against the Interim Constitution has helped the JTMM to strengthen its political base. Eleven people have died in the unrest, which does not appear to be abating despite Prime Minister Koirala,s January 31 appeal for dialogue. Biographical information for leaders of both JTMM factions is provided in paras. 6 and 7.

JTMM is Born

2. (SBU) The Jantantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM) is a splinter faction of the Maoist-affiliated Madhesi Mukti Morcha (MMM)(Madhesi Liberation Front). (Note: Madhesis are a historically disenfranchised group that immigrated to the Terai from India, mostly over the past 50 years.) Jaya Krishna Goit was ousted from the presidency of the MMM in July 2003 because he supported a single, independent Madhesi state in the Terai. Senior Maoists insisted that the Terai should become two separate autonomous regions. Goit formed the JTMM in July 2004, and his group has been battling against the Maoists and the Government of Nepal for control of the Terai since that time. In July 2006, Nagendra Kumar Paswan (alias Jwala Singh) snatched the leadership of the JTMM from Goit. Both JTMM (Goit)and JTMM (Singh) factions intensified their violent activities after the Maoists declared war against the JTMM in July 2006. The numbers of JTMM cadre are unknown and could range from the low hundreds to a couple thousand.

JTMM's Violent Activities in Terai

13. (SBU) In recent months, JTMM (Goit) and JTMM (Singh) have both engaged in brutal acts of violence, particularly in the Terai Districts of Siraha, Saptari, Dhanusha and Rautahat. The JTMM factions have mostly been targeting the Pahaadi (people originally from the hill districts of Nepal). A list of recent activities follows:

-- In September 2006, the JTMM shot and killed MP Krishna Charan Shrestha of the pro-Royalist Rastriya Prajatantra (National Democratic) Party in Siraha District.

-- In December 2006, after imposing "prohibitions" on Pahaadi drivers operating vehicles in the Terai, JTMM (Singh) killed a child and injured two other passengers after attacking a bus at Bhardaha in Saptari District, torched a cargo truck at the same spot on the same day, and torched a truck and abducted four passengers, also in Saptari District.

-- In December 2006, JTMM (Goit) murdered Krishna Neupane, a district-level leader of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist, at Hazariya in Sarlahi District.

-- In January 2007, JTMM (Goit) detonated bombs in five different places in Kanchanpur in Saptari District to force compliance with its three-day Terai "bandh" (closure) from January 12 to 14.

-- On January 16, 2007, JTMM (Goit) threatened all private and public sector offices in the Terai to forcibly retire all Pahaadi employees and retain only Madhesis.

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Demands of Both JTMM Factions

14. (SBU) Both JTMM factions have raised similar demands, including:

-- Declaration of an independent state in the Terai;

-- Expulsion of Pahaadi "rulers" from the Terai;

-- Creation of an indigenous Terai army, police, and administration;

-- Revenue collected from the Terai to be utilized for the development of the Terai only;

-- Cessation of infiltration of "Nepalis" into the region;

-- The Government of Nepal to declare those the Maoists and the government have killed in the unrest since January 16 to be "martyrs" and provide Nepali Rupees 1,500,000 as compensation to each family;

-- Delineation of national electoral constituencies on the basis of population;

-- Citizenship to be distributed to Terai people by Terai administrators;

-- Return of lands the Maoists confiscated during the insurgency; and

-- An end to Maoist extortion and abduction.

JTMM vs. MPRF: Demand for Inclusive Democracy

15. (SBU) The protest program the Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF), a democratic, Madhesi-based organization, launched in the eastern Terai on January 16 against the Interim Constitution has boosted the prominence of the JTMM

because both groups share many of the same concerns. The principal difference is that the MPRF has not called for an independent Terai state. (Comment: The occasional demands by some JTMM leaders for an autonomous Madhesi zone and proportional representation may reflect internal division within the JTMM over whether an independent Terai is achievable. End Comment.) The MPRF has alleged that the Interim Constitution which was adopted January 15 failed to address the issues of the Madhesi. It has forcefully advocated that the Constituent Assembly election planned for June should be based on proportional representation, and has voiced concern that the Interim Constitution failed to guarantee an autonomous Madhesi region. The killing of an MPRF protester by the Maoists in Lahan, Siraha District, on January 20 further inflamed tensions in the region. The government has invited the MPRF, JTMM and other ethnic-based community leaders for talks to discuss their demands. So far, the JTMM and MPRF have rejected the government's call for a dialogue. Meanwhile, eleven people have died and scores have been injured in the protests.

Biographical Note: Jaya Krishna Goit

16. (SBU) Jayakrishna Goit is elderly, perhaps in his 80s. He was born into a Madhesi family in Saptari District. Although never an elected official, Goit was with the Communist Part of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) until joining the Maoists in 1996. In 2001, he was appointed head of the Maoist Madhesi People's Liberation Front. After being ousted from that position in 2003 due to disagreements over an independent versus autonomous Madhesi state, Goit founded the JTMM in 2004.

Biographical Note:
Nagendra Paswan alias Jwala Singh

17. (SBU) Jwala Singh is JTMM Chairman. He ousted Jaya

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Krishna Goit, who was the Chairman of JTMM, in July 2006. Singh started his political career in 1990 as a cadre of the United People's Front (UPF). He worked as the Siraha District Secretary of Baburam Bhattarai's UPF faction. Singh went underground with the Maoists in February 1996. He also served as Siraha District President of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists from 1994 to 1996. Singh is in his early 40s, and was born in Siraha District to a poor Dalit (low-caste) family.

Comment: Madhesi Rights Movement Resonates in Terai

18. (C) The Madhesi rights movement, whether led by the generally peaceful MPRF or violent JTMM, has clearly resonated with the Madhesi population in Nepal's Terai -- a population that has long felt marginalized by the political mainstream. The Ambassador was struck by the depth of feeling among Madhesis during a trip to the Terai in mid-December (reftel). Pressure has been building since January 16th on all of the parties in the Seven-Party Alliance to act. On January 24, 53 Madhesi members of the Interim Parliament from the governing parties, including four ministers, submitted a list of demands to the Prime Minister. On January 29, the sole minister from the Madhesi-based Nepal Sadbhavana Party - Anandi Devi (NSP-A), submitted his resignation citing Government inaction. In response to the ongoing crisis, on January 31, in his first nationwide television address, Prime Minister Koirala offered to increase constituent representation for denser population areas, such as the Terai. He also accepted the principle of a federal state, but did not provide any further clarification. Even with these concessions, neither the JTMM nor the MPRF will likely scale down their protests until they see concrete action.

19. (C) The failure of the SPA and Maoists to consult with Madhesi leaders prior to the PM,s January 31 address as well as the Prime Minister,s appointment of Home Minister Sitaula, whose removal is a principal demand of the Madhesis, as chief negotiator has further enflamed passions in the Terai. The Deputy Chief of Mission spoke January 31 with Dr. Suresh Chalise, the Prime Minister,s Foreign Policy Advisor, in search of answers, but Chalise was unable to respond substantively to our concerns. There is still time for the Government of Nepal to address the genuine grievances of the Madhesis. With a Constituent Assembly looming, however, we anticipate that other groups could also take their long-standing grievances against the central government, long dominated by high-caste Pahaadis, to the streets. The Government's mishandling of the current crisis gives little reassurance that it is up to the task of addressing these grievances.
MORIARTY